

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

«حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ:
”رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِي ﴿۹۹﴾ لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ.”
كَلَّا، إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَائِلُهَا،
وَمِن دَرَائِعِ بَرْزَخٍ إِلَىٰ بَيْتٍ يُعْتَقُونَ ﴿۱۰۰﴾
الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ۹۹-۱۰۰

*«The nonbelievers continue in their wrongdoing and lying) until, when death comes upon one of them, he says, “My Lord, send me back. Perhaps I may do good in that which I have left behind.” No! It is but a word that he speaks, and behind them is a **barzakh** until the Day when they will be resurrected.»*

﴿Al-Mu'minūn 23:99-100﴾

حَيَاةُ الْبَرْزَخِ

LIFE IN *AL-BARZAKH* FROM DEATH UNTIL RESURRECTION

Second Edition

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ مُصْطَفَى الْجِبَالِي

MUHAMMAD MUSTAFĀ AL-JIBĀLY

مَنْشُورَاتُ الْكِتَابِ وَالسُّنَّةِ
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PRELUDE

Opening Sermon

إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ، نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا
وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ.

Al-hamdu lillāh. Indeed, all praise is due to Allāh. We praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allāh from our souls' evil and our wrong doings. He whom Allāh guides, no one can misguide; and he whom He misguides, no one can guide.

وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ. وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ.

I bear witness that there is no (true) god except Allāh — alone without a partner, and I bear witness that Muḥammad (ﷺ) is His '*abd*' (servant) and messenger.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهِ، وَلَا

تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ آل عمران

«O you who believe! Revere Allāh the right reverence, and do not die except as Muslims.»¹

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ، وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا، وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً، وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ﴿النساء ١﴾

«O people! Revere your Lord who has created you from a single soul, created from it its mate, and dispersed from both of them many men and women.

¹ *Āl 'Imrān* 3:102.

Revere Allāh through whom you demand things from one another, and (cherish the ties of) the wombs. Indeed, Allāh is ever-Watchful over you.»¹

«يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ۖ يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ، وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ، وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ، فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا» الأحزاب ٧٠-٧١

«O you who believe! Revere Allāh and say fair words. He will then rectify your deeds and forgive your sins. He who obeys Allāh and His Messenger has certainly achieved a great victory.»^{2, 3}

أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ، وَخَيْرَ الْهَدْيِ هَدْيُ مُحَمَّدٍ (ﷺ)، وَشَرُّ الْأُمُورِ مُحْدَثَاتُهَا، وَكُلُّ مُحْدَثَةٍ بِدْعَةٌ، وَكُلُّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ، وَكُلُّ ضَلَالَةٍ فِي النَّارِ.

Indeed, the best speech is Allāh's (ﷻ) Book and the best guidance is Muḥammad's (ﷺ) guidance. The worst affairs (of religion) are those innovated (by people), for every such innovation is an act of misguidance leading to the Fire.⁴

Our Mission: Purification and Cultivation

Correct Islāmic beliefs and actions must derive from Allāh's Book and His Messenger's (ﷺ) Sunnah, and should be guided by the knowledge

¹ *An-Nisā'* 4:1.

² *Al-Ahzāb* 33:70-71.

³ The above paragraphs, including the Qur'ānic portions, are known as "*Khuṭbat ul-Ḥājah* (the Sermon of Need)". The Prophet (ﷺ) often started his speeches with this sermon, as was recorded by Muslim (868), Abū Dāwūd, and others, from Ibn Ma'sūd, Ibn 'Abbās, and other companions (ﷺ).

⁴ The Prophet (ﷺ) also said this paragraph when starting a speech, as was recorded by Muslim (867), *an-Nasā'i*, and others, from Jābir Bin 'Abdillāh (ﷺ).

and understanding of the *ṣaḥābah* (رضي الله عنهم). This is the clear path of guidance that Allāh (ﷻ) has drawn for people, and that leads to their immediate and ultimate success and happiness.

Sadly, most Muslims have departed, to varying degrees, from this magnificent path. Thus, any serious work for reviving Islām among the Muslims must involve two fundamental components:

- ① Purification: the process of clearing this path from obstacles and obscurities, and guiding people to it.
- ② Cultivation: the steady and relentless process of teaching people how to live upon this path and abide by its dictates.

These two components were central to the Prophet's (ﷺ) mission, as Allāh (ﷻ) indicates:

«هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ، يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَاتِهِ، وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ، وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ، وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ» الجمعة ٢

«It is He who has sent among the unlettered a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His *āyāt*, purifying them, and teaching them the Book and Wisdom — although they were previously in clear deviation.»¹

From this, we realize the urgency of providing the English-speaking public with responsible writings that refine the understanding of Islām and present it in a pure and simple form that incorporates two aspects:

- ① Purified Islāmic teachings
- ② Practical guidelines for implementing them.

Indeed, this is the mission that we adopt, and this book is a humble step in that direction.

¹ *Al-Jumu'ah* 62:2.

Purification

Purification (or *taṣfiyah*) is required in regard to our sources of Islāmic knowledge, our beliefs, and our practices.

A. PURIFYING OUR SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE

Narrations that are falsely attributed to the Prophet (ﷺ) or his companions (رضي الله عنه) may not be used as sources of knowledge or bases for action. In fact, these narrations are among the main causes of deviation from true Islām. Therefore, purifying our knowledge from the weak and fabricated narrations is an essential task that must be fully incorporated into our learning and teaching efforts. Praising those who strive in purifying the Islāmic knowledge, Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«يَحْمِلُ هَذَا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ كُلِّ خَلْفٍ عُدُولُهُ، يَنْفُونَ عَنْهُ
تَحْرِيفَ الْغَالِينَ، وَأَنْتِحَالَ الْمُبْطِلِينَ، وَتَأْوِيلَ الْجَاهِلِينَ.»

«This knowledge will be carried by the trustworthy individuals from every generation — they will expel from it alterations of the extremists, falsehoods of the liars, and misinterpretations of the ignorant.»¹

B. PURIFYING OUR BELIEFS

The belief of many Muslims has been tainted with misconceptions arising from philosophical arguments and un-Islāmic notions. Therefore, the necessary purification process demands purifying our faith so that it is based only on authentic texts from the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and clean from any form of *shirk* (joining partners with Allāh). Such was the belief of the *ṣaḥābah* that Allāh (ﷻ) praised, saying:

¹ Recorded by al-Bayhaqī, Ibn 'Adiyy, and others from Abū Hurayrah, Ibn Mas'ūd, and other companions (رضي الله عنه). It is verified to be ḥaṣan by al-Albānī (*Mishkāṭ ul-Maṣābiḥ* no. 239).

«فَإِنْ ءَامَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا ءَامَنْتُمْ بِهِ فَقَدْ اهْتَدَوْا» البقرة ١٣٧

«So if they believe as you (O Prophet's companions) believe, they are indeed truly guided.»¹

C. PURIFYING OUR ACTIONS

Many Muslims mix their religious practices and acts of worship with innovations (*bid'ahs*) that are not authorized by Allāh (ﷻ) or His Messenger (ﷺ). Therefore, a great effort is needed to purify the Muslims' acts of worship so as to conform with authentic texts from the Qur'ān and Sunnah, comply with the understanding and practice of the *ṣaḥābah*, and reject *bid'ahs*. This is the only acceptable path of guidance, as Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ، وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، نُؤْتِهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ، وَنُصْلِهِ جَهَنَّمَ، وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا» النساء ١١٥

«Whoever opposes the Messenger — after guidance has become clear to him — and follows other than the path of the believers², We will give him what (consequence) he chose and admit him into hell — the most awful destination!»³

Cultivation

Cultivation (or *tarbiyah*) is to establish our beliefs and actions upon the purified knowledge. Cultivation goes hand-in-hand with purification.

A. BECOMING TRUE FOLLOWERS OF THE SALAF

The above discussion about purifying our beliefs and actions must extend into cultivating ourselves and our communities upon the

¹ *Al-Baqarah* 2:137.

² The description "believers" here applies primarily to the *ṣaḥābah* (رضي الله عنه).

³ *An-Nisā'* 4:115.

3 *Al-'Asr* 103:1-3.

﴿وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا﴾ آل عمران ١٠٣

«And hold fast, all together, by the rope of Allāh, and be not divided among yourselves.»¹

C. PRESENTING THE ISLĀMIC SOLUTION

Inviting to the Truth includes providing realistic Islāmic solutions to contemporary problems. There is no doubt that Allāh's guidance is the only comprehensive way for resolving people's problems at the individual and communal levels. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَأَنْ أَحْكَمَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ، وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ﴾ المائدة ٤٩

«Arbitrate among them according to what Allāh has revealed, and do not follow their errant views.»²

Indeed, we seek Allāh's guidance and help, and we implore Him (ﷻ) to enable us to purify and cultivate ourselves and our communities in the way that is most pleasing to Him — *āmīn*.

¹ *Āl 'Imrān* 3:103.

² *Al-Mā'idah* 5:49.

PREFACE

The Inevitable Journey

Our soul inevitably passes through a route that starts with birth, passes through death, and ends with Resurrection in the next life. This route revolves around death, and is strongly marked with events that precede and succeed it. These events include sickness, pre-death and post-death situations, the intermediate life in the grave (*al-Barzakh*), and lapses of time we spend sleeping that count as "minor death". These, and related issues of the soul, are the subjects that we discuss in "The Inevitable Journey" over a sequence of titles as follows:

①	Sickness, Regulations & Exhortations	الْمَرَضُ: أَحْكَامٌ وَعِظَاتٌ
②	Inheritance, Regulations & Exhortations	المِيرَاثُ: أَحْكَامٌ وَعِظَاتٌ
③	Funerals, Regulations & Exhortations	الْجَنَائِزُ: أَحْكَامٌ وَعِظَاتٌ
④	Life in <i>al-Barzakh</i> from Death until Resurrection	حَيَاةُ الْبَرْزَخِ
⑤	The Dreamer's Handbook: Sleep Etiquettes & Dream Interpretation in Light of the Sunnah	آدَابُ النَّوْمِ وَتَغْيِيرِ الرُّؤْيَى

We base our discussions on authentic texts from the Qur'ān and Sunnah, guided in their explanation by the understanding of the eminent '*ulamā*' of Islām. We strive to eliminate elements of superstition and falsehood that have crept into these parts of human life by way of tradition and ignorance.

Each book in this series is intended as a complete handbook and reference in its subject matter. The material is often supplemented with

charts and diagrams for easy reference, discussion, and study.

This Book

SUBJECT MATTER

Death is the ultimate reality that no human being can escape. It forces us to realize the worthlessness of this worldly life and the necessity of preparing for the eternal abode in the next one. It eliminates any hope for permanent prosperity in this life, thus subduing people and challenging all of their false claims and deviant beliefs.

With death, people are transferred to an intermediate stage of living totally different from the life in this world. Once there, they have no way of returning to this life.

The purpose of this book is to discuss details of this intermediate life, *al-barzakh*. The discussions are based on authentic texts from Allāh's (ﷻ) Book and His Messenger's (ﷺ) Sunnah, avoiding unfounded presumptions and speculations that people import from various cultures and philosophies.

Through our in-depth discussions of the incidents of *al-barzakh*, we hope that we provide a sound and vivid understanding of this inevitable stage of life. Consequently, this should help a Muslim prepare himself for *al-barzakh* and what lies beyond it in the hereafter.

We attempted to present the material in a structured and organized manner, often in tabulated format, to make it possible to use this book as a classroom or study-circle reference.

THIS EDITION

The first edition of this book was limited to translating and organizing selected chapters and sections from specific books dealing with the study of *al-barzakh*. Furthermore, we included in the first edition the Arabic texts only for the Qur'ānic citations.

In this new edition, we have rewritten the whole book, adding extensive texts and numerous important notions. We based our discussions on a large number of references, as can be seen from the list of references at the end of the book. With this detailed study, we

were able to reach a better understanding of *al-barzakh*, often clarifying serious misconceptions, such as the meaning of *sijjīn* and *'illiyyūn*, and the location of the souls in *al-barzakh*.

In this edition, we have also included the Arabic text for all *ḥadīths*, and have provided most of the Arabic vowel signs (*tashkīl*).

Furthermore, in our *ḥadīth* references, we now provide the *ḥadīth* reference numbers for al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrations (according to 'Abd ul-Bāqī's standards). As for other narrations, we provide the locations where they are verified to be authentic (usually from al-Albānī's (رحمته) books).

An Important Note Concerning *Ghayb*

Many situations and concepts discussed in this series (The Inevitable Journey) relate to *ghayb*. In dealing with such issues, we should apply the following important rules:

- a. Matters of *ghayb* that are mentioned in the Qur'ān and Sunnah should be fully accepted and adopted.
- b. The texts concerning *ghayb* have real meanings that are within human reason — otherwise, Allāh would not have mentioned them to us. For example, the texts about *Jannah* describe trees, fruits, rivers, jewelry, clothing, and other things with which we are familiar. This helps in providing a general idea of what to expect in *Jannah*, although we know that there is no comparison between the everlasting splendor of *Jannah* and this life's temporal glitter.
- c. Unless there is authentic evidence to the contrary, *ghayb* issues should be understood and interpreted verbatim, in accordance with the apparent meaning of the texts.
- d. Our reasoning is based on our experience in the physical world where we live. Since *ghayb* relates to a totally different world that is not governed by our physical laws, we should not attempt to subject *ghayb* issues to such laws.

May Allāh, the Almighty, guide the Muslims in all of their affairs to His Book and His Messenger's (ﷺ) Sunnah; He is All-Hearing and All-Knowing.

Acknowledgement

All praise and thanks are due to our Lord (ﷻ) who facilitated the completion of this work. May He reward all the Muslims who helped and supported this effort in various ways. In particular, may Allāh (ﷻ) reward my *shaykh* and teacher, Muḥammad Nāṣir ud-Dīn al-Albānī, whose works have benefited us in ways beyond description, my daughters who proofread the manuscript and provided valuable suggestions, and my son 'Abd ur-Raḥmān who typed a portion of the Arabic text.

We ask Allāh (ﷻ) to make this humble effort helpful and profitable to the Muslims, forgive our shortcomings, purify our work from hypocrisy and conceit, and accept it from us.

Our Lord, forgive me, my parents, and all of the believers, and bestow Your peace and praise upon our Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ).

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ مُصْطَفَى الْجِبَالِي
Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-Jibālī
 Al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah
 Wednesday, 26 *Rabī' ath-Thānī* 1427
 24 May 2006

CHAPTER 1

THE APPROACH OF DEATH

People's Attitude Toward Death

Most people hate death and try to keep it away from their thoughts, because it is the terminator of their worldly pleasures and delights, and of the ties and attachments they cherish in this life. Indeed, death is a gruesome barrier that every human must cross along his way to the hereafter.

The natural dislike of death, however, should never undermine our strong hope of entering paradise, where we would enjoy eternal happiness and unlimited delights, and, most importantly, where we would meet our Lord (ﷻ).

EXPECTING GOOD FROM ALLĀH

When a person is at the verge of death, he should turn submissively to his Lord, seeking His forgiveness and hoping for His mercy and generosity. Jābir (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

« لَا يَمُوتَنَّ أَحَدُكُمْ إِلَّا وَهُوَ يُحْسِنُ بِاللَّهِ الظَّنَّ، فَإِنْ قَوْمًا قَدْ
 أَرَادَهُمْ سُوءٌ ظَنَّهُمْ بِاللَّهِ ﷻ، فَأَصْبَحُوا مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ. »

«Let no one among you die except while expects good from Allāh. Indeed, there are people whose expectation of evil from Allāh has brought them to ruin and made them among the losers.»¹

Commenting on this *ḥadīth*, an-Nawawī (رحمته الله) said:

¹ Recorded by Muslim (2877), Abū Dāwūd, and others.

“A person’s expecting good from Allāh (ﷻ) means: hoping that Allāh will show him mercy and forgiveness. When the person is healthy, he should hold (in his heart) both fear and hope, giving more weight to fear. When death approaches him, hope should prevail, mostly or entirely. This is because fear leads to avoiding sins and increasing in good deeds, and these actions become mostly impossible at that moment. On the other hand, holding hope in Allāh is recommended then because it reflects reliance on Him and submission to Him.”¹

When a dying person’s hope for Allāh’s (ﷻ) rewards and forgiveness is sincere and well-founded, Allāh rewards this by fulfilling his expectation. Abū Hurayrah and Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«يَقُولُ اللَّهُ ﷻ: “أَنَا عِنْدَ ظَنِّ عَبْدِي بِي، وَأَنَا مَعَهُ إِذَا ذَكَرَنِي (دَعَانِي).”»

‘Allāh says, “I am at my servant’s hope in Me, and am with him whenever he extolls or calls Me.”’²

A RIGHTEOUS BELIEVER LONGS TO MEET ALLĀH

When the reality of death comes to a true believer, he welcomes it and earnestly longs to meet his Lord (ﷻ) in *Jannah*, realizing that this meeting would signify the greatest of goodness and bounties. In return for this longing, Allāh (ﷻ) also longs to meet His beloved servant.

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«مَنْ أَحَبَّ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ أَحَبَّ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ، وَمَنْ كَرِهَ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ كَرِهَ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ.»

‘Whoever loves meeting Allāh, Allāh loves meeting him. And whoever hates meeting Allāh, Allāh hates meeting him.’³

¹ *Al-Minhāj* 17:206.

² Recorded by al-Bukhārī (7405, 7505), Muslim (2675), and others.

³ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (6507-6508), Muslim (2683-2686), and others.

When she heard this from the Prophet (ﷺ), ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) exclaimed, “O Prophet of Allāh, do you mean hating death? We all hate death!” The Prophet (ﷺ) responded:

«لَيْسَ كَذَلِكَ! وَلَكِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنَ إِذَا حَضَرَهُ الْمَوْتُ، بُشِّرَ بِرَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانِهِ وَكَرَامَتِهِ، فَلَيْسَ شَيْءٌ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِمَّا أَمَامَهُ. فَأَحَبُّ لِقَاءِ اللَّهِ، وَأَحَبُّ اللَّهِ لِقَاءَهُ. وَإِنَّ الْكَافِرَ إِذَا حُضِرَ بُشِّرَ بِعَذَابِ اللَّهِ وَسَخَطِهِ وَعُقُوبَتِهِ، فَلَيْسَ شَيْءٌ أَكْرَهَ إِلَيْهِ مِمَّا أَمَامَهُ، فَكْرَهُ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ، وَكَرِهَ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ.»

‘This is not what it means! When death comes to a believer, he is given the tidings of receiving mercy, acceptance, and merit from Allāh. Nothing is then dearer to him than what lies ahead of him; so he loves meeting Allāh, and Allāh loves meeting him. But when death comes to a nonbeliever, he is given the tidings of Allāh’s anger, torture and punishment. Nothing is then more hateful to him than what lies ahead of him; so he hates meeting Allāh, and Allāh hates meeting him.’¹

Similarly, Shurayḥ Bin Hānī’ (رضي الله عنه) was puzzled when he heard the above *ḥadīth* from Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه), so he went to ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) and said, “O Mother of the Believers, Abū Hurayrah relates a *ḥadīth* from Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) that, if true, means that we are all lost!” She said, “A loser is only he who has been declared so by Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ). What is he relating?” Shurayḥ related to her the *ḥadīth*, adding, “And none among us but hates death.” She explained:

“قَدْ قَالَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، وَلَيْسَ بِالَّذِي تَذْهَبُ إِلَيْهِ، وَلَكِنْ إِذَا شَخَصَ الْبَصَرُ، وَخَشَرَجَ الصَّدْرُ، وَافْشَعَرَ الْجِلْدُ، وَتَشَنَّبَتِ الْأَصَابِعُ، فَعِنْدَ ذَلِكَ، مَنْ أَحَبَّ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ، أَحَبَّ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ، وَمَنْ كَرِهَ لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ، كَرِهَ اللَّهُ لِقَاءَهُ.”

¹ Recorded by al-Bukhārī (6507) and Muslim (2684).